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PREPARING FOR THANKSGIVING

If you are an old housekeeper, you probably know all the secrets of getting through a large family holiday gathering such as Thanksgiving dinner without confusion or fatigue. There are at least four of these secrets which should be passed on to the less experienced homemakers who may be undertaking their first celebration of this kind.

First: Choose an easy menu. Especially one which can be prepared, in part, ahead of time. Nothing flurries a housekeeper more than having too many things cooking at once, especially when it is nearly time to serve the whole dinner.

Next: Attend to every detail possible on the two days preceding the holiday. Go to market. Look over the table linen, glasses, and silver, and get everything in order. Make such things as cranberry jelly and the appetizer course. Clean the turkey or chicken and prepare it for stuffing. Make the stuffing. But do not actually stuff the bird until just before roasting.

Third: Organize your helpers. Plan so that each one has a definite task to be responsible for--arrange the centerpiece, set the table, prepare vegetables, see to the butter, bread, water, relishes and extra chairs for the table, or bring in wood for the fireplace or range. Give boys something to do that takes them out of the work going on in the kitchen. They'll want to help, if asked in the right way. If the group is very large, a little time spent in working out a plan beforehand, and assigning tasks in writing will be repaid by a smoothly run meal. Of course you must plan the order of your own work, too.

Fourth: Start early enough on Thanksgiving Day so you can move steadily through the tasks to be done without rushing and finish cooking with time enough to put your kitchen somewhat in order. Then afterwards with willing helpers the dishes will disappear like magic.

For example, take the following menu suggested by the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture: Tomato cocktail, roast turkey or chicken with savory stuffing, gilet gravy, cranberry jelly, celery, olives, candied sweetpotatoes or mashed white potatoes, brussels sprouts or some other green vegetable, pumpkin tarts, cider, coffee for adults.

You can make the tomato cocktail the day before and keep it cold. It adds to the decorative effect of the table to have the cocktail in place when you announce the meal. The cranberry jelly or sauce, too, can be put into molds on Tuesday or Wednesday. Let the pumpkin tarts and candied sweets occupy the oven while you are putting the stuffing in the turkey, for in most ovens there is not much room for anything else after the turkey goes in. You can give the sweetpotatoes a final browning and warming in the broiling oven when the turkey is about ready, or it may be easier for you to have the mashed white potatoes. If you time your dinner so that everything is ready at least 10 minutes before the hour set, you will be able to dish up . . . without undue haste.

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